

UKRAINE

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

14 May – 10 June 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Situational overview:** During the reporting period, the security situation in eastern Ukraine has again deteriorated, becoming volatile and tense.
- **Protection concerns:** Freedom of movement across the line of contact remains a primary concern. The suspension of social and pension payments to IDPs until their residential address is verified is an ongoing concern.
- **Legislation update:** The Council of Ministers adopted Resolution no. 637, legalizing the suspension of social payments, including pensions, to internally displaced persons.
- **Assistance provided:** Since 14 May, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs) and emergency shelter assistance to more than 1,000 people.



Neighbourhoods of Donetsk city near the airport and the line of contact were severely damaged during heavy fighting in 2014-2015. Despite ongoing shelling, widespread destruction and the difficult socio-economic situation, people continue to live in these areas. Others visit on regularly to check on their property and to visit friends and family who have stayed behind. Some stay in the area as they are afraid of looting, have no place to go or are physically unable to leave due to age or disability. Others, particularly the elderly, return to tend to their smallholdings as they suffer economic difficulties since their pensions were suspended. Main concerns of remaining residents also include lack of access to basic services, such as electricity, gas and drinking water, as well as repairs to damaged houses. The recent intensification of hostilities on the line of contact and the fear of further outbreaks of fighting have a devastating effect on the psychological wellbeing of the local population. *Photo: UNHCR/D. Charskykh*

KEY FIGURES

72.9 per cent

of people crossing the line of contact are concerned about insecurity

61 per cent

cross by private cars

43.3 per cent

are aged 40-65

74.3 per cent

travel to visit relatives

51.8 per cent

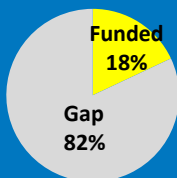
cross the line of contact every month

Source: [UNHCR crossing the line of contact survey \(May 2016\) \[pdf\]](#)

FUNDING

USD 34.8 million

requested for the operation in 2016



PRIORITIES

- Leading the Protection and Shelter/NFI Clusters.
- Supporting the Government of Ukraine on IDP and refugee/asylum issues.
- Advocacy on freedom of movement, humanitarian access, and other concerns.
- Provision of humanitarian assistance, especially near the line of contact and in the non-government controlled area.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The security situation in eastern Ukraine has become volatile and unstable following a period of relative calm in early May. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [reports](#) continued violations of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Fighting continued on the line of contact in Donetsk region between Donetsk airport and Avdiivka and in the vicinity of Horlivka and renewed in the area east of Mariupol. Despite the deteriorating security situation, Novotroitske checkpoint reopened on 16 May, somewhat easing pressure on neighbouring checkpoints in Donetsk region. In Luhansk region, only the pedestrian crossing at Stanytsia Luhanska is operational.

Freedom of movement of people across the line of contact is an ongoing problem. While fewer people are crossing than during the holiday period at the beginning of May, long queues of 300-500 cars are common, with some people forced to wait overnight at checkpoints. The SBGS reports that almost 3 million people have crossed the line of contact since the beginning of the year, averaging some 20,000 people per day. Specific problems include the inherent risk to personal safety of being on the line of contact, limited opening hours (usually 0600-2000 daily), technical problems with the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) database, the extortion of bribes, frequent changes to the rules and lack of shelter and sanitation facilities. Ukrainian authorities issue fines to people transiting from the non-government controlled area of Luhansk to the government controlled area via the Russian Federation, as they do not have the correct exit stamps in their passports. These difficulties push some people to take unofficial routes across the line of contact, enhancing their exposure to the risk of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The blanket suspension of social assistance and pension payments for IDPs pending verification of residential addresses remains a primary concern. The problem is compounded by the lack of clarity and consistency among state authorities regarding procedure for the renewal of IDP certificates. UNHCR's partners provide assistance to IDPs on how to reinstate the payments. The reregistration process is more complicated for those living in non-government controlled areas due to the necessity to cross the line of contact and lack of information, particularly for the elderly and other vulnerable groups. The procedure for reinstatement from the moment of application to the receipt of payments takes approximately one month.

Humanitarian access to the non-government controlled area of Donetsk remains limited for all UN agencies and other international organizations pending "registration" with de facto authorities. While the "registration" of UN agencies remains on hold, UNHCR implements its activities in Donetsk through NGO partners, conducting protection monitoring and implementing community-based projects. UNHCR partner NGO People in Need (PiN) has been "registered" and has received permission to undertake shelter activities. In the non-government controlled area of Luhansk, UNHCR's "registration" with de facto authorities expired on 23 April and has not yet been renewed. This has not affected UNHCR's activities in the area to date; UNHCR continues to implement its programmes and to conduct some protection monitoring activities. Damage assessment and the distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and shelter materials to the affected population continues unhindered.

External Displacement

UNHCR continues to monitor the refugee situation in neighbouring countries. According to government sources in receiving countries, the total number of Ukrainians seeking asylum or other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries now stands at 1,389,452, with the majority going to the Russian Federation (1,092,212) and Belarus (139,143). In other neighbouring countries, 261 Ukrainians sought asylum in Moldova, 79 in Romania, 71 in Hungary and 26 in Slovakia. As of 10 June, since the beginning of the crisis, in the top five receiving countries of the European Union there were 7,967 applications for international protection in Germany, 7,267 in Italy, 5,153 in Poland, 3,176 in France and 2,742 in Sweden.

The OSCE Observer Mission monitoring the Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints on the Russia-Ukraine border inform that total average cross-border traffic increased at both checkpoints during the latest reporting period, from 10,690 to 10,736 crossings per day. There was a daily average net flow of 219 people leaving Ukraine for the Russian Federation. This represents a reversal of the recent trend seen in early May of more people entering Ukraine.

Data source: Respective national asylum authorities

Achievements



Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster led by UNHCR, continued its advocacy to stop the arbitrary suspension of social payments and benefits to IDPs, to de-link social payments and pensions from IDP registration and to harmonize the IDP Law with by-laws and regulations related to residence registration. Lack of harmonization creates obstacles to IDP registration, renewal of IDP certificates and re-instatement of social benefits. The amendments should provide instructions on how regional offices of the Department of Social Protection (DoSP) will: (i) enable habitual residents/stateless persons to register as internally displaced; (ii) enable the provision of alternative evidence to establish displacement; (iii) provide “way-forward” procedures on how to verify IDP presence, given the removal of the requirement of the State Migration Service (SMS) stamp. Another concern is the lack of regulations explaining how village councils should create and maintain IDP registers. According to Law no. 888, as of 10 December 2015, residence registration has been transferred to local city or village councils for all Ukrainian nationals. However, it is not clear whether local councils will be involved in ‘verifying IDP presence’. Cluster advocacy efforts have yielded results; several key stakeholders including the British Ambassador and EU counterpart have raised the issue with high-level officials, including the President of Ukraine.
- The Cluster is concerned that as of 1 July all IDP social benefits and pensions must be paid through ‘Oshchadbank’. The procedure for allocating benefits is complex due to the need for bank branches to receive IDP case folders from local DoSP offices. This can take several months, during which assistance is not paid and does not accumulate.
- Training on protection mainstreaming for humanitarian organizations working in Kharkiv and northern Donetsk was delivered by the Cluster. Participants represented local and international NGOs, UN agencies and local authorities.
- Protection monitoring visits were undertaken in Slovyansk and Kramatorsk, including discussions with IDPs facing difficulties re-instating their IDP payments and benefits as well as with their residence registration.
- The Cluster contributed to the review of indicators for the inter-agency vulnerability assessment led by REACH, to ensure that protection considerations are mainstreamed into indicators for each thematic area of the assessment. The assessment will be conducted in the government controlled area (GCA) and will be used to inform humanitarian response programming. Sampling will cover 2,000 households; 1,000 IDPs and 1,000 members of the host community. The final report will be submitted to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in September.
- More information on Cluster activities can be found in the May 2016 [factsheet \[pdf\]](#).

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- On 8 June, the Council of Ministers adopted Resolution no. 637, “*On some issues on conducting of social payments to internally displaced persons.*” The Resolution legalizes the suspension of social payments, including pensions, to internally displaced persons. New procedures adopted by the Resolution raise a number of concerns. The residence of IDPs receiving social payments will be verified by local offices of the Department of Social Policy (DoSP) every six months. Other state agencies will also conduct verifications. Reinstatement of payments will take two months. In cases where the IDP certificate is cancelled, renewal of payments will take six months upon renewal of the certificate.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR partner the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provided 94 consultations and provided legal assistance in 10 cases. The Right to Protection (R2P) provided assistance in 158 legal cases. Stantsia Kharkiv provided 1,886 general consultations, 533 legal consultations and 554 psychosocial consultations. The NGO also provided training on SGBV response to 20 IDPs. UNHCR partner Slavic Heart provided 1,790 general consultations, 2,157 legal consultations and 472 psychosocial consultations. 62 per cent of the consultations were provided to women. In April and May, UNHCR partner CrimeaSOS provided consultations to 2,092 people and took part in 62 court cases. Main concerns were the suspension of social assistance and pension payments to IDPs, civil documentation, access to social services, humanitarian assistance, crossing the line of contact, medical issues, housing, employment, depression and child-related issues. In the non-government controlled area of Donetsk, UNHCR

¹ [International Protection Considerations Related to the Developments in Ukraine – Update III](http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html)
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/56017e034.html>

partner Maximal provided 640 general consultations, 150 legal consultations and 350 psychosocial in Donetsk city and Amvrosiivka district. Main issues related to applying for social assistance, PTSD and humanitarian assistance.

- UNHCR together with Ministry for Temporary Occupied Territories and IDPs presented a [survey \[pdf\]](#) of Ukrainians' attitudes towards internally displaced persons from Donbas and Crimea conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS). Among other findings, the survey shows that 47 percent of Ukrainians have a generally neutral attitude towards IDPs, while 43 per cent have a positive attitude.

Shelter and Non-food Items (NFIs)

Emergency Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter Cluster led by UNHCR and co-chaired by People in Need (PiN), performed Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM), conducted by all Clusters at the request of the Humanitarian Country Team. Due to lack of response on the part of partners, the Strategic Advisory Group used the December 2015 external evaluation report as substitute in order to establish a transitional plan.
- Since the beginning of 2016, Cluster partners have provided essential assistance to the people in need:
 - 77,975 individuals received NFI support;
 - 672 households received acute emergency repairs;
 - 3,733 households received light and medium repairs;
 - 12,493 households received winterization cash grants.

Achievements, Impact and Identified Needs

- During the reporting period, UNHCR NFI and shelter materials were provided to over 1,000 people. UNHCR's Kharkiv field office distributed NFIs to 220 people and provided shelter material to ADRA for distribution. In non-government controlled areas, UNHCR in Donetsk provided 2,800m² of tarpaulin to partner NGO MOST for emergency shelter repairs in areas near the line of contact. In Luhansk, UNHCR provided NFIs to 389 people, including a joint distribution of 1,274 NFIs with NGO Put Dobra to 130 disabled people and their families. The office distributed NFIs such as kitchen sets, blankets, towels, water coils and bags to 44 families of Ternovoe, Vishneviy Dol and Valiivka villages, including people from vulnerable groups. 87 tonnes of shelter material was provided to 46 vulnerable families in Heorhiivka village and a further 30 tonnes of shelter material to people in Khryashchuvate village. UNHCR also provided NFIs to the Social Rehabilitation Centre for People with Disabilities for distribution to vulnerable people in the area.



In the non-government controlled area of Luhansk region, UNHCR continues to provide shelter and NFI assistance to people living in conflict affected areas. Following damage assessments, light and medium repairs are being conducted in Velyka Verhunka, Heorhiivka, Khryashchuvate, Krasny Partizan, Krasnyi Yar, Luhansk city, Mala Verhunka, Novosvitlivka, Peremozhne, Stakhanov, Sverdlovsk, Verhunskiy Rozyizd, Veselenke, Zelena Roshia and Zelenopillya. While the shelter program covers all vulnerable groups, priority is given to families residing in damaged houses. *Photos: UNHCR/D.Volkova*

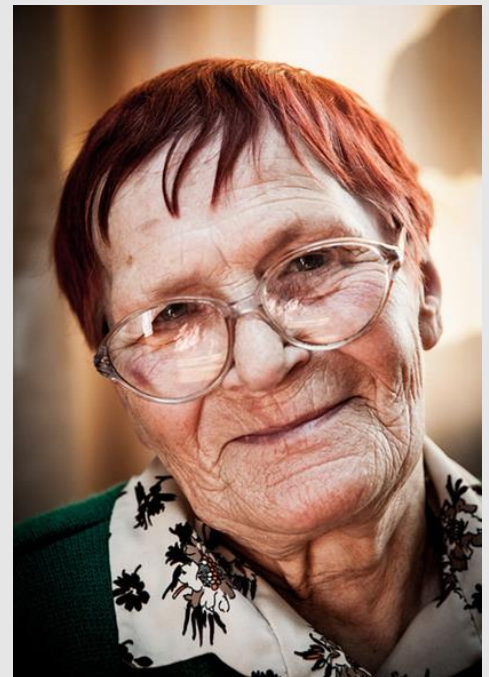
'A Gift of Experience' benefit concert to support elderly and disabled IDPs

76-year-old Nina has been living in a hospice for elderly people for more than a year. In 2014, volunteers helped evacuate her and four other elderly people from Alchevsk, in Luhansk region to Kyiv region.

Despite all the difficulties in her life being disabled, Nina remains cheerful. Every morning she tries to find new words of support for others who are staying at the hospice. Some 20 elderly people have found temporary refuge here after spending months living under shelling and hiding in basements.

According to the Ministry of Social Policy, nearly 60 per cent of IDPs are elderly and disabled. Beside economic and social isolation, these vulnerable groups suffer from worsening health. Many of them say that forced displacement has had a negative impact on their wellbeing.

UNHCR together with partners, organized a charity event in the town of Brovary near Kyiv in support of elderly and disabled internally displaced people. *Photo: UNHCR/S. Pochehuv*



Working in partnership

The humanitarian response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by international organizations, the Government, local and international NGOs. UNHCR works with 15 implementing partners and other partners providing assistance to internally displaced people through protection and legal assistance, policy development and capacity building and the distribution of emergency shelter materials and non-food items. UNHCR co-leads the Shelter and Non-food Item Cluster and co-leads the Protection Cluster.

UNHCR implementing partners (IDP operation): [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [CrimeaSOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Desyataya Kvitnya](#) | [Dopomoha Dnipra](#) | [Donbass Development Centre](#) | [HelpAge International](#) | [Most | Maximal](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Proliska](#) | [Slavic Heart](#) | [Stantsia Kharkiv](#) | [Right to Protection](#)

Key Shelter and Non Food Items Cluster partners: [Adventist Development and Relief Agency](#) | [Caritas Ukraine](#) | [Chesna i Syvata Kraina](#) | [CrimeaSOS](#) | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Donbas reconstruction and development agency](#) | [Dopomoha Dnipra](#) | [HIA Hungary](#) | [IOM](#) | [Mercy Corps](#) | [Ministry of Regional Development, Building and Housing](#) | [Ministry of Social Policy](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Save the Children UK](#) | [Save Ukraine Organization](#) | [State Emergency Service](#) | [Ukrainian Red Cross Society](#) | [UNDP](#) | [Vostok SOS](#) | [World Jewish Relief](#)

Key Protection Cluster partners: [Danish Refugee Council](#) | [Crimea SOS](#) | [Crimean Diaspora](#) | [HelpAge](#) | [IOM](#) | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | [OHCHR \(HRMMU\)](#) | [OSCE](#) | [People in Need](#) | [Right to Protection](#) | [Save the Children](#) | [The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [UNFPA](#) | [Vostok SOS](#)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, particularly those with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds. UNHCR's total financial requirement in 2016 for the Ukraine situation is **US\$ 34.8 million**. This covers UNHCR's financial needs for providing protection and assistance to those displaced by the conflict inside Ukraine, as well as those externally displaced in the neighboring countries in Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation. Contributions recorded so far represents **18 per cent** of the total financial requirements.

Donors who have contributed: Funding (in million USD)

- Canada
- Estonia
- Germany
- Japan
- Private Donors
- Russian Federation
- Sweden

A total of **3.6 million** has been contributed

	Funded	Gap	Total Requested
Ukraine	6.1		34
Belarus	0	0.1	
The Russian Federation	0	0.08	
Rep. of Moldova	0	0.05	
Regional Costs	0	0.05	

Contacts:

Nina Sorokopud, Public Information Officer, sorokopu@unhcr.org, Tel: +38 044 288-9710 ext.116

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